

that were essential to protecting the constitutional rights of Americans of color—this was during Reconstruction—they were, if you will, voted along party lines? But from 1917 to 1994, civil rights were crushed by the use of the filibuster.

And so I rise today to ask for the better angels of the other body, two Members who happen to be Democratic Senators, and others who are in total lockstep in the other party.

But listen to William E. Mason saying: “But every schoolboy in the United States knows that the Senate is practically the only parliamentary body in the world where the majority cannot transact the public business, and where the minority instead of the majority transacts the business of the country.” Senator William E. Mason, April 21, 1897, a Republican.

I ask for mercy. As someone who worked for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, who had the privilege of being here for the reauthorization in the mid-2000s, who wrote the Coretta Scott bill legislation that was added that said no mid-term redistricting, and as well helped rename the bill at that time to many icons of diversity.

I want to conclude my remarks by referring to Martin Luther King’s mountaintop speech, to read as much of it as I can. He speaks at the beginning by saying if he had sneezed when he was knifed by a demented woman in the 1950s, he says, I wouldn’t have been around in 1962 when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, decided to straighten their backs up. And whenever men and women straighten their backs up, they are going somewhere, because a man can’t ride your back unless it is bent.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn’t have been here in 1963 when the Black people of Birmingham, Alabama, aroused the conscience of this Nation and brought into being the civil rights bill.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn’t have had a chance later that year, in August, to try and tell America about a dream that I had had.

If I had sneezed, I wouldn’t have been in Selma, Alabama, or Memphis.

And then they were telling me, now, it doesn’t matter, now. It really doesn’t matter what happens. I left Atlanta this morning, and as we got started the pilot said we had to stop for a moment because Dr. Martin Luther King is on the plane, we have to check and see if there were bombs.

And then I got into Memphis. And some began to say the threats or talk about the threats that were out. What would happen to me from some of our sick brothers, who did not look like me?

Well, I don’t know what will happen now. We’ve got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn’t matter with me now because I’ve been to the mountaintop.

And I don’t mind.

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I

am not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will. And He has allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I’ve looked over, and I’ve seen the promised land.

That is today, today, January 19, 2022.

I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And so I’m happy tonight.

I’m not worried about anything.

I’m not fearing any man.

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

Those who say they honor him, do not disgrace him. Vote for the Voting Rights Act.

CELEBRATING MARY LOU HAND’S 100TH BIRTHDAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true American patriot, a true American hero. Ms. Mary Lou Hand just turned 100 years old on January 15, 2022. She is from Wall, Texas.

Mary Lou served this country as a nurse in the Army in World War II. After first being stationed in Maryland and Mississippi, she was sent to England, where she provided critical care for the wounded; and, more importantly, she raised soldiers’ spirits by spreading laughter.

It was during her service in England that she met her husband, Bob. The two had six children together and lived in three countries and subsequently seven States.

Ms. Mary Lou Hand has 6 children, 13 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren. She has cultivated a life of love and family, filled with gratitude.

Throughout her century of life, she has dedicated her time to helping others. Her selfless dedication has played out through her commitment to her family as well as her impressive career serving our country and caring for others.

Mary Lou, thank you for your service and happy birthday.

RECOGNIZING THE CAREER OF JOHN “J.B.” BYERS, SR.

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to tell you about another patriot. You know, we have patriots, and we have leaders, servant leaders throughout our entire country. This is a special one that I would like to talk about in the community of Staten Island, Mr. John “J.B.” Byers, Sr.

A New Jersey native, Mr. Byers began his remarkable 40-year career delivering letters for the U.S. Postal Service at the USPS Mariners Harbor Post Office and subsequently served 18 years at the Port Richmond office.

During his four decades of exemplary service, John has become a fixture of the community. He has become beloved by those he happily served for so many years on his daily route.

The best measure of John’s success was not how efficient he was at his job, but it was the undeniable impact he had on his neighbors in the communities that he served so well. He went above and beyond in his duties, taking time to engage in the community, the lives and the livelihoods of the people he served every single day.

His influence is evident by the meaningful and positive impact he made on those who knew him best, his neighbors, his colleagues, and his friends. Story after story from coworkers and community members alike show J.B.’s generosity, kindness, and work ethic. So much so that on John’s last day at the U.S. Postal Service, those on his route threw him a surprise party to demonstrate how much the service that he did for them meant to them and their lives.

John dedicated his life to his community through his career, and he became a trusted friend and familiar face to all. But even with his tenured and successful career, I know the greatest joy for him today stems from the beautiful family he and his wife, Kathleen, have raised. As he enters retirement, John and Kathleen are celebrating the birth of their first grandchild, Madison Patricia Byers, who was born on December 23, 2021.

More than a mailman, J.B. has brought great joy and integrity to countless families and neighborhoods, and we thank him for his service to his community.

HONORING MRS. PAM BURKE

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the hard work and dedication of Mrs. Pam Burke of San Angelo, Texas.

Mrs. Burke runs the Wesley Soup Kitchen, a wonderful ministry that has been providing meals, along with love and care, to all those in need since 1948.

Mrs. Burke has been at the Wesley Soup Kitchen for the past 12 years, preparing over 200 meals a day. In addition to feeding the homeless and those less fortunate, this ministry provides holiday meals and has been a consistent combatant of malnutrition and hunger throughout the community.

Mrs. Burke is a wonderful example of God’s calling in John, chapter 21 to feed His sheep. For no monetary gain of her own, Mrs. Burke dedicates her time and her energy to opening her arms and caring for the community.

I know I am not alone in saying that I am grateful for the mission of the Wesley Soup Kitchen and am honored to know that wonderfully impassioned individuals like Mrs. Pam Burke are working throughout each of our communities.

PROTECT THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Madam Speaker, this great Nation was founded on a fundamental promise, a promise that, as

Americans, we shall all have a say in the decisions that affect our lives.

But as you know, this Nation has not always lived up to that promise. Indeed, the story of American democracy is a story of ordinary Americans daring to make extraordinary sacrifices in order for the promise to become a reality for all Americans, regardless of their race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or class.

Madam Speaker, today is a day of great significance and great consequence. We, in the House, passed the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Act, as well as the Freedom to Vote Act. Now, today, the Senate will take up and debate both bills and vote on the future of our democracy.

What is at stake is clear. The current state of voting rights is very clear. Old battles have become new again, as State legislatures across this Nation have erected deliberate barriers to the ballot box in an all-out assault on the right to vote.

Though we no longer have a poll tax, nor do we have to count how many jelly beans are in a jar, we do know that the modern-day restrictions are no less pernicious: Long lines, closed polling stations, purged voter rolls, bans on early voting, and the list goes on and on. In Georgia it is now a crime to hand out food and water to a voter in line. And so I ask you, What are we afraid of?

Madam Speaker, the significance of this moment is not lost on me for, you see, representing Alabama's 7th Congressional District, voting rights are very personal. People in my district fought, marched, prayed, and, yes, some died for the equal right of all Americans to vote.

I know that this body reveres our late, great Congressman John Lewis. It was John who said that the struggle for voting rights is not a struggle for one day or one year, it is a struggle for a lifetime.

So we have to fight—every generation does—to protect the progress of the past and to advance it. And that is exactly what the John Robert Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act does.

I ask our Senators; how will they be remembered? Years from now, when our children and grandchildren look back on this moment and ask, What did you do to fight for voting rights? How will you be remembered?

Now, we are not asking our Senators to march. We are not asking them to sacrifice. We are not asking them to bleed on a bridge.

We are asking them to do their jobs. To do their jobs.

We are asking them to have the courage of their convictions, to use their position of great power to save our democracy in this critical moment.

Madam Speaker, to my colleagues, voting rights advocates, and stakeholders, I say, no matter what the outcome is today, we cannot be deterred. John Lewis and those brave foot soldiers did not give up. Think of where

our country would be if John and Hosea Williams and those that were bludgeoned on that bridge hadn't picked themselves up 2 days later and marched again.

Voting rights is a struggle of a lifetime, and we have to be in that fight. We cannot be tired. We can be frustrated. We can be downright mad. But we cannot give up. We have so many more miles to go before we declare victory. And victory we must have because our democracy depends on it.

Our colleague, JIM CLYBURN, this past weekend invoked the Bible. He said, it is darkest before the dawn. Indeed, by not taking this moment to protect the right to vote, we are allowing extremists to strip away the power of the people.

We all celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday on Monday. Dr. King said that "... the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." But it only bends if we Americans decide to challenge it, decide to make sure that this Constitution lives up to its ideals. It is time for the Senate to do their part.

In remembrance of the sacrifices of others, the Senate must reform its rules. We all have a role to play. And I say to the activists and to the Senators, the time to act is always now.

King said it is always time to do what is right. We must get into some good trouble. We must keep our eyes on the prize, and the prize is our democracy and restoring the right to vote.

FEDERAL TAKEOVER OF ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, Washington Democrats have become desperate to shield their slim majorities in the House and Senate; so desperate, in fact, that they are willing to silence millions of Americans by orchestrating a Federal takeover of elections.

Look no further than H.R. 1 and H.R. 4. These pieces of legislation are the ones Americans should be concerned about.

□ 1030

Madam Speaker, all Washington Democrats have done is operate off their own manufactured hysteria.

Thanks to ranking member RODNEY DAVIS of the Committee on House Administration, we have the facts on why the Democrats' narrative is wrong.

2020 saw the highest voter turnout in 120 years, and according to Pew, 94 percent said it is easy to vote. There is clearly no widespread "voter suppression" issue in this country.

Georgia's new "voter suppression law" has more days of early in-person voting than New York.

Texas' "voter suppression law" ends pandemic exceptions like universal

drive-thru voting and 24-hour voting. Neither existed in Texas before 2020. Neither widely exists even in blue States.

When it comes to abolishing the filibuster, there are even more facts.

The filibuster prevents Federal laws swinging wildly with every election.

If the filibuster is taken away, millions of citizens and entire States would be silenced.

Senator SCHUMER's push is not a response to the 2020 election or new State laws.

As early as 2019 and August 2020, Senator SCHUMER was already discussing abolishing the filibuster, but only if he won control.

If the filibuster is wiped clean off the map, imagine what will be done next: Packing the Supreme Court; ramming through the Green New Deal; defunding the police, and every other misguided item that Washington Democrats have in their political playbook.

The consequences would be disastrous for America.

Madam Speaker, Americans do not want the one-party rule agenda of Washington Democrats, the anniversary of which is tomorrow.

They do not want to see their own country become even more bankrupted by the failed policies under this administration and razor-thin majority.

Republicans will continue to stand firm against this far-left agenda, and we will not sit on the sidelines.

It is vital that Americans know what these election bills will do and the consequences that will affect this great country if they are passed.

Thank you again to Ranking Member RODNEY DAVIS and his staff for their continued hard work and diligence on this issue.

CONGRESS IS SERVING OUR VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Mrs. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LEE of Nevada. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about news that many people don't hear too much about coming out of Washington.

Too often they only hear one side of the story about divisiveness, gridlock, and a general unwillingness to put results over politics.

And don't get me wrong, it is a problem, but there are a whole lot of us in this body that are fighting every day to put an end to that and break the cycle in Washington, especially when it comes to our veterans.

In the past 2 months alone we have seen legislative breakthroughs that had the support of both Democrats and Republicans to help make sure that our country continues to serve our Nation's veterans.

I introduced bipartisan, bicameral legislation with Representatives ANTHONY GONZALEZ, TONY GONZALES, and COLIN ALLRED to invest in the Zero Suicide initiative and bring accountability into the VA.